KILPECK CHURCH, HEREFORDSHIRE.

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THIS exceedingly interesting building is distant from Hereford about eight miles, in a fertile and beautiful part of the county, on the borders of Wales, and which in earlier times was considered as a part of that country. Its history is brief, and Mr. Lewis, who has published an illustrated quarto volume on the subject, gives us the earliest piece of legitimate history connected with it, when he says "in 1134 the present church (dedicated to St. David), along with the chapel of St. Mary, in the castle,* and all right and possessions appertaining to them, were given to the Abbey of Gloucester, by Hugh, son of William Fitz Norman, lord of Kilpeck Castle. It is very probable that this baron had built the church. Either he or the Abbey of Gloucester established here a small cell or priory, dependent on the larger house. In the time of Thomas Spofford, Bishop of Hereford (1422 to 1428), the dependent cell is said to have been united to the abbey. On the dissolution of monasteries by Henry VIII., the site of the Priory of Kilpeck was sold to Baldwin Treville, from whom it descended, either by purchase or heirship, to the Booths, and then to the Clives, in which last family it still remains."

The interest of this church, as an early example of architecture was pointed out by King, in his *Munimenta Antiqua*, 1805, vol. iv., p. 96, but he does not do more than direct attention to it, and it was neglected, owing probably to its secluded situation, in an unfrequented part of the country, until the publication of a view and account in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1833, by Mr. T. L. Parker, after which Mr. Lewis's volume, and the notice of its very curious sculptures, given in the *Archæologia*, again brought it into notice.

The church is small, measuring 66 feet by 26, and bears a very strong resemblance in design, to that at Barfreston, Kent. It consists of a nave and chancel, the apse lighted by three deeply splayed windows. The chancel arch is elaborately sculptured with figures and foliage. The north door is also richly ornamented in the same way, the pillar on the left side having the knights sculptured upon it, which formed the subject of a paper by Mr. Gage Rokewode in the *Archæologia*, vol. 30. This door, which is partially concealed in our view by the comparatively modern wooden porch, is of most remarkable and elaborate workmanship, and in a fine state of preservation. Indeed, the uninjured state of the external ornaments of this very remarkable church is surprising, and the singular projecting heads seen upon the western wall are quite perfect, and very strikingly peculiar in effect. The flat buttresses of the church, and the highly enriched corbel table, which runs entirely round it, abound in variety and boldness of execution. The original windows are round-headed. That in the western wall has the pillars and moulding elaborately sculptured with interlaced scroll-work, the capitals being lion's heads. This church, as it possesses its wall entire according to its original design, is more interesting than that at Barfreston, the western wall having there been destroyed, and that portion of the building rebuilt in a more modern taste. It is altogether a singularly perfect specimen of a highly decorated village church in the twelfth century. It is in contemplation to repair and restore it where necessary. It is however to be hoped, that as it presents so little of decay and ruin, that the restorations may be done with the slightest possible change in its venerable features. The modernization of Barfreston has destroyed much of its interest, and gives the idea of a new building on an old model. F. W. F.

* "The Castle of Kilpeck, by Herebenfeld, now longeth to the Earl of Ormond; sum ruines of the walls yet stand. The Priory stood from the Castle a quarter of a mile." — *Leland. Itinerary.*

CARVED OAK DOORS IN READING.

The annexed is a drawing of a carved oak door, situate in Gun-street, Reading. The building to which it belongs is called "The Oracle," a place formerly used by clothiers.

The entrance to the court-yard or offices is through a handsome stone gateway, supported by two elegant composite columns much worn by the hand of time and the neglect of the Reading folks, who, I regret to say, cannot fully appreciate the interest which this gateway possesses. I sincerely trust before long, some one will be found to persuade the townspeople to restore it.

On the cross panels of the doors are the initials "J. K." and the date 1628. The scale of the drawing is half an inch to a foot.

13, Hart-street, Bloomsbury. G. T. J.

*** *The Oracle, Reading.*— In 1624 Mr. John Kendrick, a successful woollen merchant, bequeathed the sum of 7,500*l.* to Reading, his birth-place, for the erection of a house in which the poor might be employed, and to provide materials for carrying on the clothing trade, working in wool, and preparing materials for dyeing. With this sum the corporation pur-

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